

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 21 and 23 - 26 are now pending in the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 10, 17, 23 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant admitted prior art (AAPA) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,507,381 B1 (Katsuya et al), U.S. Pat. No. 5,317,434 (Ohara) and 5,818,625 (Forgette et al). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1, 10, 17, 23, and 24 have been amended to recite that the first and second alignment layers partially overlap the sealant region on which the sealant is formed along a side of the sealant provided with the terminals such that an edge of the first and second alignment layers terminates in the sealant region. Claims 1, 10, 17, 23, and 24 have also been amended to recite that another edge of the first and second alignment layers crosses over the sealant region to an outer side of the sealant along a side of the sealant other than the side provided with the terminals.

This configuration is shown, for example, in Figure 5A where it can be seen that the first and second alignment layers 13 and 23 partially overlap the sealant region 3 on which the sealant is formed along a side of the sealant 3 provided with the terminals (generally shown by reference numeral 7D) such that an edge of the first and second alignment layers 13 and 23 terminates in the sealant region 3. Figure 5A also shows that another edge of the first and second alignment layers 13 and 23 crosses over the

sealant region to an outer side of the sealant along a side of the sealant other than the side provided with terminals. This is shown, generally, at the left side at the cross-sectional perspective view of the liquid crystal display. None of the cited prior art references teach, suggest, or provide motivation for such a structure.

More specifically, the present invention is directed to a structure that can maintain a predetermined gap between a pair of substrates by overlapping the sealant with the alignment layer at four sides of the panel. Furthermore, this structure allows conduction between the pair of substrates at a side provided with the terminals by terminating the edge of the alignment layer in the sealant region along a side of the sealant provided with the terminals. None of the cited references teach or suggest such a structure.

More particularly, the Examiner alleges that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of the admitted prior art and Katsuya with Ohara, because Ohara teaches an orientation film that is formed so as to extend outside the region which underlies the opposing substrate. In other words, the orientation film extends beyond the area defined by the overlap of the two substrates. Referring to Figures 7 and 8 of Ohara, however, it can be seen that the orientation film 5 (shown in crosshatching in Figures 7 and 8) extends outside the sealant on all four sides. The combined structures of the admitted prior art, Katsuya and Ohara, therefore, does not yield the claim configuration of a first and second alignment layer partially overlapping the sealant region on which a sealant is formed along a side of the sealant provided with the terminal such that an edge of the first and second alignment layers terminates in the sealant region. Nor does the teachings of Ohara combined with admitted prior art and

Katsuya teach that another edge of the first and second alignment layers crosses over the sealant region to an outer side of the sealant along a side of the sealant other than the side provided with terminals. Because the cited prior art references, either singularly or in combination, fail to teach this aspect of the claimed invention, the claimed invention would not have been obvious.

Claims 2 – 9, 11 – 16, 18 – 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA, Katsuya, Ohara and Forgette as applied to claims 1, 10, 17, 23 and 24 above, and further in view of U.S. 5,150,239 (Watanabe et al). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 2 – 9, 11 – 16, and 18 – 21 are dependent on independent claims 1, 10, and 17, addressed above. Because these claims are dependent on independent claims 1, 10, and 17, respectively, these claims are not obvious for at least the same reasons.

Claims 25 – 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA, Katsuya, Ohara and Forgette as applied to claims 1, 10, 17, 23 and 24 above, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,150,239 (Watanabe et al) and U.S. Pat. No. 4,759,614 (Yokokura et al). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 25 and 26 are dependent on independent claims 1 and 17, respectively. Claims 25 and 26 are not obvious for at least the same reasons as independent claims 1 and 17, respectively.

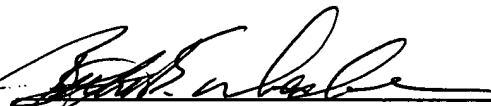
Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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